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The Many Voices of 'Art Song'

David Code

Why, after a century whose lyrical legacy extends (for a wildly random sample) from Cole Porter and Duke Ellington through Elvis Presley and Stevie Wonder, and from the Lennon and McCartney partnership through the individual *oeuvres* of Björk and Joni Mitchell and Amy Winehouse, would anyone choose to base a song course, yet again, on the arch-canonical repertoire of the early German Romantics? Even if we put aside all questions of origin – that is, about what exactly grants such precocious creations as 'Gretchen am Spinnrade' their genre-defining status within the immemorial history of words sung to music – a larger question remains. Why would anyone still want to re-inscribe, as mythic well-spring of 'art song', the work of Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann, who bring with them not only a language now much less central to music scholarship than it once was, but also a conception of musical art rooted in Goethean organicism (and Germanic Idealism) that has come under repeated critique within recent reflections on the scope and values of a University music curriculum?

I do not intend this opening note of post-canonical self-consciousness as a mere hand-wave in the direction of 'musicological correctness'. My choice of the subject and content of the course I have long taught at the University of Glasgow under the heading 'Romantic Song' undoubtedly rested, initially, on good old-fashioned reverence for the 'greatness' of the musical and literary materials in question,

buttressed by a keen interest in the cross-disciplinary complications their interplay brings in tow. But as the course has evolved over several years, I have also found these same materials ever richer as nodes for critical exploration of the very questions I have raised above – about canonicity and tradition; and about the modes of cultural transmission, understanding and evaluation. Which is to say, ultimately, about the aims and ideals of music education itself.

For a start, however, the chimerical creature ‘Art Song’ calls for explanation. Here, we should note that most students in this course will have taken our introductory ‘Listening and Repertory’ course, under whose inclusive remit they will have had ample opportunity to consider the specious nature of all attempts to elevate any kind of musical art over any other. But they will also have had the chance to weigh the categorical value that may still remain in ‘art song’ as the label for a relatively distinct subset of all songs, in which a composer appropriates a pre-existing piece of literary art, hitherto complete unto itself, and by drawing it into the realm of music inevitably ‘makes it their own’ to some significant extent. The inexhaustible richness that arises from this collision of voices – crudely: a poetic one and a musical one, though neither proves easy to pin to a single speaker – renders this genre a rich field for reflection on the very idea of ‘art’, as it informs (if it does) countless individual experiences of contemporary musical culture.

Still, even if we accept this provisional generic boundary a more basic question soon follows. Surely the challenge to confront critically both musical artistry and the myriad verbal arts that gather under the rubric of ‘poetry’ would be far easier if we

were to start, at least, with a familiar language? It could well make pedagogical sense, these days, to focus first on the art songs of (say) Benjamin Britten or Aaron Copland, and thus the poetic craft of John Donne or Emily Dickinson, in order to bring unfamiliar literary principles into view unimpeded by a foreign tongue. But I find that the task of translation itself carries crucial lessons about the close, recursive engagement needed to draw any (native or foreign) poetry into feeling and understanding. Musty whiffs of Teutonic exceptionalism aside, the language of Goethe *et al* now offers most of our students the invaluable unsettling effect of any encounter with a linguistic 'Other' – much like those that likely gave many scholars their first clear sense of (e.g.) verb tense, sentence structure and linguistic personhood in their own over-familiar mother tongue.

This interdisciplinary exploration thus begins, as it must, by confronting the polysemous voices intrinsic to language even before it is shaped into poetic utterance. The degree to which any such artful writing remains at basis untranslatable can begin to come vividly into focus even through a first, close pursuit of the shades of meaning that escape any attempt to bring Goethe or Heine into English. At the next level of inquiry, the attempt to trace the ways in which poetic craft compounds the implications of some unique structure of words may, paradoxically, only heighten a sense of foreignness even as it gives a distorted glimpse of the humane messages or (more likely) questions it carries. But the attempt can also begin establishing a personal relationship to the literary work – and thus a standpoint from which to assess the inevitably rather different relationship that will appear in someone else's musical setting.

Turning finally to song, we reach the most treacherous stage of exploration. It can be all too easy to see the (great) composer's 'reading' as not only successful (as if by definition) but entirely natural, and thus to overlook those creative decisions that escape explanation in mimetic or affective (or even literary) terms – let alone those at odds with the expectations fostered by our own poetic analysis. The hope is that even a faint sense of *surprise* at someone else's reading might inspire further thought about creative 'Otherness' and open paths of explication that will likely bend, soon enough, towards the thorniest domains of criticism.ⁱ But we cannot cut off the chain of voices even here, for we cannot really *hear* a compositional reading without some (private or public) performance – and thus some further mediation by unruly minds and bodies (if only our own). Once, it may have been easy to dismiss this last layer of reading as extrinsic to 'the music' in question. But nowadays we are more solicitous about the role of performance in musical experience. And it proves fascinating, later on, to turn to actual recorded voices – and to radical re-voicings by composers and arrangers – to hear just how much latitude they claim in their service, respectful or otherwise, to the living tradition of art song.

Some Generalities

Before embarking upon close critical study, I generally try and elicit a few shared notions about Romanticism, and briefly consider the historiographical question about why the *Lied* attained a new status, after 1810, as a central genre (Dahlhaus 1989; Rosen 1995; Taruskin 2005; Rushton 2002). If any number of familiar ideas

might emerge from the first venture, for the second it seems particularly crucial to emphasize the new interest in a *Volkston* or *Volkstümlichkeit* that was to prove so influential across all of nineteenth-century music history. To give some emphasis, as well, to the development of the fortepiano can usefully add one technological concern that utterly eludes explanation in terms of 'great artists' alone.

Zeroing in on aesthetic challenges, I present from the start a provisional list of all the discrete points of analytical purchase that might serve to illuminate both poetic craft (e.g. prosody, grammar, voice and point of view, allegorical implication) and musical setting (e.g. rhythm, melody, texture and register, affect). I imagine such a list may seem artificial in isolation from critical practice. But I particularly want to have the following question in view from the start:

QUESTION: is such compositional 'reading' often, or always, a kind of *misreading*? (Goethe actually preferred the bland accompaniments by Zelter to the imaginative, psychologically rich settings by Schubert!)

And in a broader view, this vision of an orderly analytical discipline (idealistic as it may prove) can offer a useful *point de repère* for the attempt to let careful encounters with poetry forestall all illusions of 'natural' song setting.

In outline, finally, the 'Romantic Song' course proceeds from a single Schubert *Lied*, to one of his song cycles, to several selections from Robert and Clara Schumann,

before returning to the Schubert discography for thoughts on performance and arrangement. Here I will trace a more streamlined trajectory focusing on Schubert alone. Methodologically speaking, finally, while drawing selectively on relevant professional literature, I also use the dialogic context of the course to illustrate how critical insights might also emerge from a relatively *ad hoc* approach to poetry and music – which can help to encourage a lasting metacritical perspective on more ‘disciplined’ approaches encountered later on.

Part 1: Schubert and Goethe, From Lyric to Ballad

Saving such much-discussed instances as ‘Der Erlkönig’ and ‘Gretchen am Spinnrade’ for independent student inquiry, I start with a later, more succinct example from Schubert’s Goethe songs. The tiny ‘Wandrer’s Nachtlied’ D. 768 brings a text that finely encapsulates many central concerns of the perennially problematic idea of ‘lyric poetry’.ⁱⁱ By all accounts Goethe’s single most famous poem, this little shred of artful utterance inspired the song published in 1824 as op. 96, no. 3 – which richly exemplifies, in turn, Schubert’s skills as a musical reader and the transformation such reading implies.

This song also boasts a thorough analysis by Thrasybulos Georgiades, which can show how an eminent specialist negotiates our critical challenges (Georgiades 1986). But in keeping with the notional discipline, I like to start by considering the puzzles even this tiny poem poses to a translator. Here is the text from the *Sämtliche Werke*

(Goethe 1988, 65) along with a prose translation and a few of many attempts, over the years, at a poetic English equivalent:

Wandrer's Nachtlid

Über allen Gipfeln

Ist Ruh',

In allen Wipfeln

Spürest du

Kaum einen Hauch;

Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.

Warte nur! Balde

Ruhest du auch.ⁱⁱⁱ

Over all the hills is peace, in all the tree-tops you feel hardly a breath; the little birds are silent in the forest. Only wait, soon you [will] rest too.

(1) Over all the hilltops

Is rest,

In all the treetops

Thou feelest

Scarce a breeze;

The birds are stilled in the forest.

Only wait, soon like these

Thou too shalt rest.

(2) Over every hill

Is repose.

In the trees, you feel,

Scarcely goes

The stir of a breeze.

Hushed birds in the forest are nesting.

Wait, you'll be resting

Soon too like these.

(3) O'er all the hill-tops	(4) Over mountains yonder,
Is quiet now,	A stillness;
In all the tree-tops	Scarce any breath, you wonder,
Hearest thou	Touches
Hardly a breath;	The tops of all the trees.
The birds are asleep in the trees:	No forest birds now sing;
Wait, soon like these	A moment, waiting—
Thou, too, shalt rest.	Then take, you too, your ease

No doubt – as a colleague once exclaimed at the photocopier – each verse translation is, in its own way, atrocious.^{iv} But that is precisely the point. And if it is hard to choose a 'least worst' in overall quality, they can all serve together to highlight those ideas that prove most elusive to foreign readers.

An initial invitation to students to note any striking discrepancies might elicit a few comparatively straightforward observations that are nonetheless open to 'poetic' elaboration (e.g. the setting, in 'hills' or 'mountains'; the various shades of anthropomorphic inflection given for 'Ruh'). More telling points of interest start to emerge, I find, with the questions raised by the first verb (line 4). Almost every translator reads 'spüren' as 'to feel'. But a telling instability – one 'to hear'; one shift of agency so that the object, 'Hauch', does the 'touching' – might serve to suggest a question about what exactly the verb's subject ('du') is 'scarcely' experiencing. A 'feeling' of something implies an intimate *feeling into* nature (the branches) rather

than a simple 'hearing'. And the slight hesitation on this point across the translations can bring focus to the sensory trajectory through these lines – that is, the incremental drawing in of focus and access, from a first embracing gaze 'over' summits, *down into* treetops (close enough to 'feel'), and then, in the next line, even closer, to the living creatures, the 'Vögelein' within, who somehow reach our awareness. With this diminutive of endearment – think of all the 'Bächleins' and 'Rösleins' in Goethe and Schubert – the questions about sense perception become most acute.

The action of these 'little birds' proves hardest of all to translate. As with 'Ruh'', previously, we find both human and non-human shadings ('asleep' or 'hushed'; 'silent' or 'stilled'). But perhaps the two oddest contortions – a new verb, 'nesting'; a resort to what the birds do *not* do ('sing') – bring us closer to the problem. For these creatures are actively *doing* something that escapes simple translation: they are 'holding still', or 'being silent'. (Might we say they are '*being*, silently'?) And a question immediately arises: how do we know? Given the nocturnal setting, it seems odd to suppose that the birds – in their non-action, up in the trees – are *visible*. We can imagine seeing high, dark vistas and hearing/feeling a faint 'breath' or 'breeze' in (with) the trees. But our sense of the 'little birds' implies something more mysterious – an attunement to shared liveness, let us say, which transcends sense perception.

The pivotal mystery sets up a striking change in tone. The imperative 'Warte nur!' ('Only wait!') startles for its directness, and then for its recasting of the noun 'Ruh'' as a decisively humanised verb, 'Ruhest du'. This second 'du' revisits a previously

overlooked problem. These days, to ask why two readers opt for ‘thou’ instead of ‘you’ might elicit student answers that circle, ironically, around the old-fashioned formal effect of the former. The truth, of course, is that this is how English speakers try to capture the *informal* second person so crucial to this poetic intimacy. And neither translation (‘thou’ or ‘you’) really catches the transformation from a somewhat impersonal ‘spürest du’ to the most iconic lyric gesture of all: the direct ‘I-You’ address from poetic persona to reader.

I have found it helpful, in furthering class discussion at this point, to refer to a fine essay by one-time US poet laureate Robert Hass, in which he suggests that ‘*the form*’ of any given poem [as distinct from its generic ‘form’, i.e. sonnet or sestina] consists in the relation between its music and its seeing’ (Hass 1984, 65). Taking the ‘seeing’ of Goethe’s little poem to mean *all* the finely calibrated senses that we have found to give access to its world, we might add a few helpful hints towards thought about what its prosodic ‘music’ adds to the formed experience:

1	Über allen Gipfeln	a	6
2	Ist Ruh’,	b	2
3	In allem Wipfeln	a	5
4	Spürest du	b	3
5	Kaum einen Hauch;	c	4
6	Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.	d	9
7	Warte nur! Balde	d	5
8	Ruhest du auch.	c	4

Numbering lines, indicating rhymes, counting syllables – even these simple exercises, I suggest, can unearth a few points of interest. For one, we see that the seemingly improvisatory utterance is actually projected through a delicate matrix of order: a

rhyme scheme built from the two most common poetic quatrains. Closer scrutiny, furthermore, finds a hidden pattern of 8-syllable pairings (6+2, 5+3 – here it can be useful to demonstrate a little exercise in ‘counting fingers’) that gains its strongest presentation in the framing four-syllable lines – ‘Kaum einen Hauch’/ ‘Ruhest du auch’ – of the second rhyming quatrain. But if this prosodic embrace of the line with the birds (and its companion) seems a fine marriage of form and feeling, it can only be exposed by reading across a different, equally strong formal pattern: the steady, irregularly paced deepening of grammatical ‘breaths’, from comma, to semi-colon, to full stop.

Turning to Georgiades now, we find that he, too, notes many of these intricacies on the way to suggesting that the ‘sixth line functions – from whichever angle we choose to look at it – as an island within the poem’ (Georgiades 1986, 86). But there is more mileage to derive from one last level of craft he brings into view. Parsing the poem’s metre and accents, he gives this stress pattern for line six:

ˇ / ˇ ˇ / ˇ ˇ / ˇ
 Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.

As he notes, the hint of ‘triple rhythm’ and ‘feel of a regularly built songlike form’ are highly appropriate to the ‘naïve, folklike’ images (‘Vögelein’; ‘Walde’). As an example of the fine qualification we might bring to even such refined criticism as this, I add, more esoterically, that the nine-syllable fragment is structured symmetrically around the pivotal sound ‘*scwhei-*’: a ‘weak-strong-weak-weak’ rhythm on either finds support in faint sonorous echoes (‘D_ V’ becomes the softer ‘w_ D’; ‘l’ and ‘n’ sounds are scattered, more haphazardly, to either side). Even while audibly evoking song-

like *Volkstümlichkeit*, the form also articulates a more secretive, inaudible focus on the sensual and spiritual mysteries encapsulated in that pivotal verb.

Perhaps this level of scrutiny exceeds what we might expect in a course – or chapter – of this nature. But such a suspicion can be turned towards basic questions about the degree to which poetry, in its simultaneous shaping of sounds and accreted meanings, always delivers a rich admixture of chance and intention. The turn to Schubert's song brings yet more complexity to this blend.

[INSERT EXAMPLE 4.1 HERE]

Example 4.1: Schubert, 'Wandrer's Nachtlid', op. 96 no. 3, D 768.

To prepare this new level of analytical scrutiny we can also turn to an article by Kofi Agawu that directly challenges the procedure outlined so far. As he puts it, the common presumption that we should start an analysis of song by 'doing as the composer did' – i.e. reading the poem – risks importing literary assumptions into a genre better approached with sensitivity to the distinct concerns of 'text-setting' and 'composition' broadly construed (Agawu 1992, e.g. 10). While his absolute-musical conception of the latter might be somewhat overstated, Agawu's intervention can support useful warnings to students against the perennial temptation to discern hilltops in harmonies or tree branches in tunes, while reminding us all of the eternally open implications of any poetic-musical interaction.

The first bars of Schubert's 'Wandrer's Nachtlied' nicely illustrate the point (see Example 4.1). While it would be absurd to discern anything as precise as a 'hilltop' in the first, processional chords, it still seems crucial to highlight, for ears accustomed to modern amplification, how effectively that low-register, octave-doubled, *pianissimo* scoring responds to Goethe's invocation of wide, dim spaces. But the slinky, chromatic inner voice in bar 2 – the most distinctive feature of the opening – is harder to tie back to poetic precedent, unless we want to riff extravagantly on the wayward Romantic interiority that both co-exists with and resists the 'symbolic order' of cadential syntax. With Georgiades, finally, we might note how the intro sets the stage for the voice, through an anticipatory approximation of both the rhythm (slightly plainer) and the melody (similar, but on the mediant) of the first line of song.

To scan through the initial vocal phrases is to find, first, a melody whose articulation according to grammatical breaths largely subsumes most intricacies of rhythm and rhyme; and then, a finely calibrated emergence of expressive lyricism. At first, a near-monotone syllabic declamation, inflected by the barest stepwise turn, marks a 'zero degree' of melodic expression. The breath after 'Ruh'' brings a first melodic reach, to a warmly harmonized subdominant (also anticipated back in bar 1), and then a gradual accumulation of archetypical lyrical devices. A first appoggiatura (the octave-doubled D) and a first touch of melisma both come with 'Wipfeln', even as a first shadow of Schubert's characteristic modal mixture (in an inner voice) expressively softens the move in to a closer sense of branches. As the accompaniment gains a syncopated throbbing, the minor-mode shading carries

forward to darken 'spürest' – crucial verb – before imparting a pang to the voice as well for 'kaum'.

In a broader view, we see that Goethe's incremental *drawing in* finds a textural equivalent, starting with the release of the bass from doubling octaves (under 'allen') and continuing, after the rising chromatic bass – expanded inversion of the slinky inner voice – to a more radical registral shift, up another octave, for the 'Vögelein'. Here, the closest accompanimental texture gains further intimacy through a recasting of the rocking quavers, which lifts the chord root to the offbeat to hint briefly at weightlessly idyllic lullaby. The pivotal line also brings a surprise. Schubert now repeats the crucial verb 'schweigen' across two bars multiply marked as an island of archetypical song: a near-exact melodic repetition bar by bar; a climactic proliferation of melismas and appoggiaturas.

The moment nicely encapsulates those questions about musical 'reading'. Maybe the lyrical flowering seems a perfect realization of the expectations fostered by that 'island' of a line. But in truth, musical song only emerges, here, through an effacement – by the contraction ('Vög'lein') and the word repetition – of the metrical 'song' Georgiades heard in the text. Yet more radical transformation follows. The imperative 'Warte nur', declaimed sequentially, brings an abrupt change of texture to prepare the rise to the vocal high point, and an enactment of 'waiting' with a pause on the weak second syllable of 'bal-de'. And after the slinky chord-voicing returns for the newly personal 'du' the whole, newly repetitive address

receives another full repetition before one 'extra' bar echoes the piano cadence once more to bring the reading to a close.

In sum, while it is surely excessive to invoke 'misreading' in this case, if we grant to Goethe's poem an expressive plainness and simplicity the equal of any haiku or Zen koan (we know he was fascinated by the East), we might find excellent cause here to open a broad, evaluative or diagnostic question about whether or not Schubert's emphatically repetitive personalization of those closing phrases actually comes at some loss. Generally finding student response to this question intriguingly mixed, I also suggest that a bit more formal inquiry invites a last critical turn. That seemingly exact repetition of the closing phrase (from 'warte nur') actually features a telling variation: a metrical shift within the 4/4 bar. Locally, the effect of the expansion is to allow the pair of two-and-a-half bar phrases to settle, finally, onto two metrically correct statements of the slinky cadence. But in a longer view, the time it takes to 'correct' this metrical focus results in a total number of bars (fourteen) that places the first textual alteration – the repeated 'schweigen' – precisely across the midpoint of the work. This deft structural calculation brings to mind the interplay in Goethe between seeming improvisation and secret formal control – and thus offers a preliminary grasp of this song's encapsulation of some central aesthetic dialectics (i.e. the interplay of formalist and expressive priorities) of its historical moment.

In presenting such detailed scrutiny of this little song as a compact model for the kinds of close attention students might summon more selectively for any other, I also use it as a springboard for two kinds of theoretical reflection. The first concerns

ultimate goals. For even after all this parsing of rhythms and proportions, we have only *prepared the ground* for an interpretation of what the poem and song might conceivably ‘mean’. Invited to this broader view, students generally have no trouble discerning the metaphorical resonances in that final promise of rest. But if the intimation of death – the end of all our wanderings – is plain enough, that is only one aspect of the possible allegorical implications of the poem and song as crafted wholes. Full appreciation of these hinges, again, on a recognition of the mysterious sense of shared liveness in the ‘island’ of silent birds, and a question about what it might offer all of us in our nocturnal awareness of mortality.

An acceptance that the discussion must remain open at this point can lead into a second theoretical realm. As an attempt to give context both for the crucial role of lyric address and the open nature of lyric form, the table below sketches a serviceable summary of a much-contested domain:

INSERT Figure 4.1 HERE

Figure 4.1 The basic types of poetic discourse
(as adapted by Renaissance and Romantic theorists from the Greeks)

Suggesting a generic context for the open-ended reading just accepted for one little lyric, this scheme also offers a means to begin introducing other kinds of poetic language, notably including the ballad form that proved a key forum for composers to extend their literary-musical explorations over broader spans.^v

It is in light of this scheme that I now briefly introduce one of the most celebrated ballads, Goethe's 'Der Erlkönig', as a vivid instance of the possibility for literary art to bring *all three* categories into intricate interplay. Here is the text and translation, lightly annotated as a goad to more detailed inquiry.

INSERT FIGURE 4.2 here

Figure 4.2: 'Der Erlkönig' as a structure of poetic discourse

I tend to withhold further comment of my own at this point, suggesting only that students might approach Schubert's setting (and the many commentaries it has spawned) with eyes and ears attuned to textual – i.e. vocal – hybridity and its possible effects on compositional choice.

Part 2: Schubert and the Song Cycle

Beyond the poetic or vocal 'types', my glance at 'Der Erlkönig' also notes only the recurring end-rhymes that impart long-range formal coherence to a highly varied strophic scheme. This small point adumbrates a new central concern as we turn to the 'song cycle' – an even more significant forum than the ballad for the extension of lyrical expression across truly epic scale. The turn to *Die Winterreise*, as my Schubert example, offers an occasion to address, as well, some new and distinct questions for the setting of strophic poems, as compared to one-stanza lyrics (Tunbridge 2010; Youens 1991).

To prepare our first look into this new genre, it can help to present a summary overview of the more straightforwardly 'narrative' progression of Schubert's earlier Müller cycle, *Die schöne Müllerin*, as a foil to the more elusive, meta-lyrical outline of *Die Winterreise*. While it is impractical to sample extensively from either set, students can be invited to *place* any song they choose for analysis, provisionally, within the distinct progression of its source cycle. Here, I will concentrate only on the first and last songs of *Die Winterreise*, a pairing that (however distant) can also serve to give a brief glimpse of the thorny problem of 'cyclicity' itself.

A familiar scheme of options for the setting of a strophic poem might help orient the discussion:

INSERT FIGURE 4.3 here

Figure 4.3: Options for strophic setting

The first song, 'Gute Nacht', nicely illustrates the creative challenges lying behind the 'modified strophic' approach Schubert chose for so many of his finest settings.

Presenting the poem for discussion in these terms (see below), we readily note the *Volkstümlich* simplicity of metre and rhyme, but also quite easily recognise, through discussion, two pressing questions for anyone considering a strophic setting. First, it is hard to see how the internal structure of all four strophes can fit comfortably with a recurring musical underlay. Second, some of the strophes seem distinctive enough in tone to require more substantial departure from strophic recurrence.

INSERT FIGURE 4.4 here

Figure 4.4: Strophic intricacies in Müller, 'Gute Nacht'

My brackets alongside the first two strophes indicate one challenge of the first kind. In the first strophe, the abrupt shift to a remembered 'May', with 'flowers', after two lines (and before a two-line return to snowy 'Now'), clearly frames the (four-line) past within a darker present. But the second strophe, temporally a more continuous 'eight line' structure, falls grammatically into a simpler 'four plus four' pattern. It is hard to imagine how the same music could serve both without compromise.

The second question, about distinctive strophes, admits of a range of possible responses. Some students sense a marked shift in tone with the question that launches the third strophe (whose howling dogs also stand out); others note the possible further anomaly when the speaker's – perhaps unconvincing – reach for proverbial compensation ('Love loves to wander ...') unfolds through three lines before breaking off for a single line of direct address. The scheme of literary types again proves relevant here, if we note how this sudden address to the 'Liebchen' sets up a strikingly personal last stanza, rife with second-person forms.

Suggesting that all such detail suffices to guide an assessment of the setting, I also preface analysis with two new musical considerations – both extrapolations from the idea of 'mode'. The first derives from a simple question: What makes for a good melody? Impossible to answer in universal terms, the query can nonetheless inspire

thought about what makes any given melody an admirable exemplar of lyrical possibility within its own musical style. I find that the pursuit of this question for *Die Winterreise* profits from the attempt to recover the deeper, historical meaning of ‘mode’ – that is, a *way* or *kind* or *fashion* of melodic behaviour (like a *raga* or *maqam*), rather than an abstract ‘set’ of available pitches.^{vi} To this end, we might usefully review the deepest bedrock of tonal rudiments: the distinct series of tones and semitones that define the major and minor scales as two interdependent realms of expressive implication. If we can thus approach the melody of ‘Gute Nacht’ with an ear for its crafted navigation of a ‘d minor’ modal environment, another slab of rudimentary bedrock – the expressive ‘palette’ of triads built on the major and minor scale degrees – can also prove illuminating of some larger formal choices. Indeed, I find that ‘Gute Nacht’ proves a suggestive instance for the case that this theoretical ‘ABC’ is a resource Schubert worked just as deftly as he did the more elaborate riches of his early Romantic harmonic syntax.

INSERT EXAMPLE 4.2 HERE

Example 4.2: Schubert, ‘Gute Nacht’, song 1 from *Die Winterreise*, D 911

Turning now to the song (see Example 4.2), we find another delicately approximate piano prefiguration of the voice, which in this case could not better exemplify modal thinking. After tersely establishing the song’s plodding quavers, the solo piano phrase unfurls a melodic line that emphatically marks – or claims – the defining turns and spans of its modal environment. Beginning with a pick-up move through the \wedge^3 - \wedge^2 semitone, the line droops down through the octave to an accented, re-

rhythmicized statement of the same semitone, newly supported by the other characteristic ‘minor’ move ($\hat{6}-\hat{5}$, $B \flat -A$) in an inner voice. Then, a brief repetitive play with the falling tonic-dominant fourth leads to a last little descent that decoratively highlights the F-E move once more (over $B\flat-A$ in the bass) before the cadence ushers us in the first vocal strophe – and a highly inventive response to the puzzles in Müller’s strophic structure.

Echoing and varying that drooping line for the first line of text, the singer’s antecedent phrase further emphasises the F-E move by reiterating it down the octave, as pick-up to yet another turn on the same modal node. The new consequent phrase, more simply triadic at first, then gives yet another little F-E turn before coming to rest on the tonic. When we now find the third and fourth lines of the poem – in both stanzas – set to exactly the same antecedent-consequent melodic pair, it appears that Schubert solves the first strophic puzzle by simply ignoring the structure of the first stanza and letting the setting be guided by the second. (Note how the compromise tramples over the imagery of ‘May’ and ‘flowers’.) But to listen on is to find that the response to competing strophic options is more complicated than it first seems.

Again, Schubert significantly alters this poem by repetition. The resulting new structure deserves schematic representation:

INSERT FIGURE 4.4 here

Figure 4.5: ‘Gute Nacht’, Schubert’s formal alteration to strophes 1 and 2

As shown, the extensive repetition, two lines by two lines, of all but the first four lines of each strophe, results in a new, 12-line version (4+4+4) of the framing dynamic initially carried by that 2+4+2 structure. The small initial compromise (for 'May') thus facilitates a refashioning of Müller's initial two formal alternatives into two more fully realised 'ternary' structures. In both cases, a middle section now names a companion (a maiden, a shadow) for the speaker, and a last section returns him to wintry solitude (the 'road deep in snow', the 'white meadow'). The re-sculpted textual form thus gives new weight to a question—lightly prefigured in Müller—about lost or illusory alternatives to alienated loneliness.

The new ternary conception thoroughly informs the musical setting (see Example 4.2). An *almost* regular series of eight-bar phrases, constructed out of repeated four-bar pairs on either side of a four-plus-four-bar sequence, sets the three new sections. The newly expansive central glimpses of companionship receive expressive support both from a warm harmonic move and a change in predominant melodic character, from downward droop to upward stride. The two close 'modulations' through F and B \flat major are better recognised as lightly tonicised ventures through the two major colours (III and VI) available in the home modal palette. The one anomaly in the phrase structure – the accented gesture inserted twice after this excursion (bars 24-25) – seems like a pointed, admonitory reminder of the true modal semitones. The interjection ushers in (and carries on into) a final section whose emphatic reiteration of the 6 $^{\wedge}$ -5 $^{\wedge}$ (B \flat -A) semitone (downbeats of bars 26-27)

for the return to repetitive melodic droop modally underlines the return, in both strophes, to wintry solitude.

As expected, the third strophe – expanded in its turn – inspires initial departures from musical repetition. The drooping antecedent phrase, almost intact, gains a newly energetic, upward tail; the consequent phrase, setting the bitter question ‘... daß man mich trieb’ hinaus?’, voices a searching rise rather than a dying fall. When a closer return to precedent for the middle section now brings back the major melodic-harmonic excursion for the unctuous proverbial turn, it is hard not to hear a whiff of irony tainting the previous idyllic sweetness. The address to the ‘Liebchen’ draws a less marked musical response, but the strophe does end with two further alterations to the vocal cadences: the first, a $\wedge^2-\wedge^7-\wedge^1$ turn that strengthens the titular ‘good night’; the second, a last high reminder of the F-E semitone with which the voice had begun.

Slight as it might seem, this second alteration proves telling preparation for the most substantive departure from strophic repetition, when the change to D major for the most personal final strophe (slipped in almost casually by the piano) comes keenly into relief with the high vocal F#-E. Schubert suffuses the new environment with further touches of modal warmth: a new E dominant seventh shading (bars 73 and 77) that seems as much a local ‘Lydian’ coloration as a true ‘V⁷ of V’; a melodic variant that adds the new major sixth degree B \natural (further brightened by an inner-voice E#) as pick-up to bars 74 and 78.^{vii} But it is in the last middle section that the craftiness of the song’s modal-harmonic conception emerges most clearly, through a

deft musical alteration best understood in light of a further change to the strophic form:

INSERT FIGURE 4.6 here

Figure 4.6: 'Gute Nacht', Schubert's alteration to the final strophe

The third strophe conforms to the precedent of two-by-two-line repetition. But in the fourth, a repetition of all four lines, as a complete section, creates a new textual 'bar' form (ABB) in place of the previous ABA structures.

Looking to the setting of the final stanza, we find a hybrid of ABA and ABB' forms. Broadly speaking, the first 'B' section revisits the prior contrast in melodic character – but with a slight change to harmonic precedent. To pass through the mediant and submediant (as before) would be to reverse the contrast in expressive hue (i.e. III and VI in minor would become iii and vi in major). But the new textual structure has shed the expressive contrast between sections. Tweaking his setting (doubly) to place these central melodic phrases on IV and I instead, Schubert discovers a more affectively uniform variant within which he can highlight, once more, the major E-F# whole step (against chiming high dominant pedal) on the most intimate words 'so that you might see'. The accented interjections, again breaking the phrasal regularity, now serve to affirm the whole steps (one, again, over Lydian warmth) rather than to insist on minor semitones. The final vocal phrases, modally translating both cadential variants from the previous strophe, prepare a last, close juxtaposition

of major and minor ^3-^2 moves before the piano plods to a close through an extended final droop.

A glance back over text and music sees how multiply Schubert's 'Gute Nacht' transcends any notion of 'natural' song setting. His response to Müller's strophic form overlooks some local details ('Mai', 'Liebchen') in order that larger motivations – a new ternary formal understanding; a long-range play with modal shadings – can gain clearer focus. By contrast, a brief glance at 'Der Leiermann' brings into view a different kind of artistry altogether, whose exemplary power is harder to pin down to detail. In stark contrast to the formal subtleties just discussed, 'Der Leiermann' offers a new critical challenge: to encompass an art of extreme impoverishment, which accomplishes a great deal by doing very little.

The text of 'Der Leiermann' (see below) offers a limit case, in the cycle, of stripped down prosody. Its lines are the shortest in the set; its pervasive weak rhymes ('e', 'er', 'en', etc.) compose numbness into poetic music itself. The overall structure – four strophes of description, one of address – also seems simple enough, though one recurring rhyme and one close textual variant ('sein [...] Teller', 'immer Leer' / 'sein Leier', 'nimmer still'), together suggest a 2 + 2 + 1 strophic parsing:

INSERT FIGURE 4.7 here

Figure 4.7: 'Der Leiermann', with implications for strophic setting

Within a setting that takes two poetic lines as the basis for each vocal phrase, Schubert strengthens these formal hints through new repetitions only of the final lines in each strophic pair. This one poetic intensification aside, he multiply infuses the song with his own version of frozen numbness.

INSERT EXAMPLE 4.3 HERE

Example 4.3: Schubert, 'Der Leiermann', song 24 from *Die Winterreise*

Most obvious is the unrelenting harmonic poverty (see Example 4.3). Set entirely over a hollow A-E pedal, the melody lurches, without respite, between implicitly 'tonic' and 'dominant' arrivals. A similar sense of entrapment multiply informs the temporal conception. A blankly declamatory quaver rhythm is enlivened only fleetingly by dotted figures; almost every vocal phrase is contained – constrained – within a two-bar frame. The rigorously exact repetition of each two-strophe section takes on, in this case, an aesthetic force in keeping with the pervasive sense of impotent circularity. Only in the final, personal strophe does a vestige of human warmth emerge. With the direct address to the 'wonderful old man' the phrase spills, for the first time, beyond the second bar; the beseeching final question then claims the more flexible dotted rhythm for a pair of extravagant octave leaps and a last arrival that also carries across the bar line. As if in response, the piano – hitherto coiling and hiccupping in *pianissimo* handle-cranks – finds one exceptional burst of *forte* before wheezing down to a final cadence.

As noted in my summary comparison of the two Müller cycles, the ending of this meta-lyrical series is disconcertingly inconclusive – and the lessons we might take from its last, pathetic human encounter have been posited in various ways. I will take those last questioning vocal gestures way to open, instead, a slightly different domain of inquiry, concerning the degrees of musical unity we might appropriately seek in this ‘cycle’.

The disparate sequence of keys, textures and vocal characters across the twenty-four songs strongly cautions against assuming any meaningful relationship between the ‘a minor’ on which ‘Der Leiermann’ ends and the ‘d minor’ with which ‘Gute Nacht’ began. But without wishing to come down too strongly on either side of a debate about tonal unity, I would suggest that the question might again benefit from the adoption of a *modal* sensitivity. The cycle ends, vocally, on the same mode-defining semitone – the high F-E, now as $\wedge 6\text{-}\wedge 5$ rather than $\wedge 3\text{-}\wedge 2$ – that once launched ‘Gute Nacht’. Absolute pitch aside, such a modal inflection – in such a vocal tessitura – will retain its audible expressive and coloristic identity across any transposition. Perhaps it is with an ear to unity (or ‘connection’ or ‘recall’) in this looser sense, rather than in any more rigorous sense of tonal structure, that we can discern the more delicate cyclic implications across this whole diverse set.^{viii}

Part 3: Singing, Playing and Adapting Schubert

If ‘Der Leiermann’ might best serve to illustrate both the power of starkly limited musical means and the expressive force of a studied phrasal discipline, one further

concern glimpsed in passing above can adumbrate the turn to a last layer of encounter with 'art song'. The piano's late *forte* outburst, I suggested, sounds like a quasi-dramatic reaction to the singer's query. To hear it this way is to open questions about incipient dramatic interplay that can usefully inform critical hearing of performance and arrangement.

At this point in the course, having introduced various (variously *ad hoc*) tools for poetic and musical analysis, I find it best to acknowledge (in all awareness of the burgeoning recent interest in performance criticism) that these last critical challenges remain even harder to encompass within a precise methodological discipline.^{ix} But I also suggest that there may still be some value, for thoughtful rehearing of this particular genre, in the provocations offered long ago by Edward T. Cone in his 1974 book *The Composer's Voice*. When introducing Cone's idiosyncratic attempt to delineate the notional 'personas' audible in song I emphasize that its value does not lie in any clear 'success' at systematic description, but rather in the interrogative approach most clearly evidenced by the fact that we encounter, at various points, three quite different schemas for song's internal relationships:

Proposition One:

Accompaniment : Vocal persona :: Narrator : Poetic character

[i.e. 'The accompaniment is related the vocal persona as the Narrator is related to the poetic character.']

Proposition Two [two alternatives]:

(a) Accompaniment: Vocal Persona :: Unconscious : Conscious aspects of character

(b) Vocal identity : Verbal identity :: Unconscious : Conscious aspects of character^x

There is no need to choose between these various options in order to weigh the critical utility of a passing comment like this one, on the very songs here under discussion:

Even when the accompaniment produces appropriate sounds, it is rarely to be considered as directly heard by the vocal persona. The protagonist of 'Der Leiermann' hears a hurdy-gurdy, but not what the singer and audience hear: a pianist playing a stylized version of what a hurdy-gurdy might sound like (30)

Cone goes on to characterize this particular 'split' more precisely:

The accompaniment suggests both the impingement of the outer world on the individual represented by the vocal persona, and their subconscious reaction. In 'Erlkönig' and 'Der Leiermann' we hear, not the actual sounds of hooves and hurdy-gurdy, but a transformation of those sounds – their resonance in the subconscious of the protagonist as interpreted by the consciousness of the instrumental persona. Even when the accompaniment appears to be dealing with external circumstances, it is usually revealing their effect on the protagonist (35-36).

Both the simple emphasis on stylization and the more complex sense of a refracted or transformed musical mimesis potentially offer fresh aural purchase on what might all too easily pass as a straightforward case of musical imitation.

Before proceeding, I like to add – as one further complication – Carolyn Abbate’s well-known challenge: ‘To Cone’s monologic and controlling “composer’s voice”, I prefer an aural vision of music animated by multiple, decentred voices localized in several invisible bodies’ (Abbate 1991, 13). With these twin provocations in mind, we now turn an interrogative ear on a few of the countless available recordings. I will here trace just one of the possible paths along which such a discussion – pursued openly, and thus unpredictably, in the classroom – might proceed. Focusing largely on ‘Der Leiermann’, I will consider just a handful of recordings, starting with three of a relatively conventional nature (Matthias Goerne and Alfred Brendel in 2004; Mark Padmore and Paul Lewis in 2009; Christine Schäfer and Eric Schneider in 2006) and proceeding to two more unconventional versions (Hans Zender’s 1996 ‘composed interpretation’ of *Die Winterreise*; the composite cycle *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai: Lieder nach Robert Schumann und Franz Schubert* written by Reinbert de Leeuw in 2007 for Barbara Sukowa). The exploration will occasionally bring me into dialogue with Cone, but it might best be read as a preliminary sketch of an answer to the questions about history, canonicity and tradition with which I began.

Predictably, of all these versions the one from the live 2004 Wigmore Hall performance of *Die Winterreise* by Goerne (a student of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Elisabeth Schwartzkopf) and Brendel (whose pianistic – and Schubertian – pedigree

needs no elaboration) presents the most traditional interpretation. At first, this 'Leiermann' wholly meets the expectations fostered by their conjoined eminence. A transcription by ear of the reverentially text-faithful piano introduction could recover Schubert's notation to an astonishing precision, down to the slurs, accents and rests. But Brendel's reverent 'realisation' becomes considerably complicated by the entry of Goerne with an indulgently 'lyrical' approach – taking as much time as possible within this rhythmic environment, giving almost every quaver and semiquaver its warm vocal bloom. The sense of a conflation of quite different temporal conceptions occasionally becomes marked: the singer, for example, stretches the return of the A-E leaps for the third phrase (second time) with an expansive *bel canto* rubato, explicable (in the absence of clear textual cause) only by a generic urge for expressive variety. And at the end, Goerne gives the question 'will ich mit dir gehn?' such local deliberation that any larger point about its escape from two-bar strictures – already forestalled by the way he lets each phrase ending taper resonantly into the next bar – feels somewhat defused.

It would not be accurate to describe these two temporal 'personae' as wholly at odds: Brendel, too, occasionally finds his own version of lyrical expressive flexibility. But even so – thinking back to Cone – there is something about the primacy of the 'vocal' here that, while it may not precisely override the 'verbal' (Goerne's diction is meticulous), pushes larger-scale, formal and imaginative dimensions of Schubert's reading decisively into the background. This is no formally embodied experience of frozen alienation, but an insistent expression of how we should feel about it – and who should determine that feeling. The point becomes most vivid when in closing,

after *portamenti* that render the octave leaps in a fully lyrical legato, Goerne's full-chested swell on the final, tied E effaces any strong sense of dramatic exchange beneath a last strong assertion of vocal priority.

To turn to the studio recording of 'Der Leiermann' by Padmore and Lewis (sung in B minor – the key of Schubert's first version) is to find starkly different conceptions of text-fidelity, of vocality and pianism, and ultimately of the song as a reading of Müller's poem. In a strikingly imaginative realisation of the initial notation, first of all, rather than treating the grace notes as the usual fast 'pick-ups' (i.e. E#-F#), Lewis strikes the three notes simultaneously, then slowly releases the bare fifth from a sour initial smear. He then carries this sound idea forward through the entire song, every time the bare fifth sounds alone in the bass (i.e. without added tenor). It is easy to imagine textual literalists crying foul. But if we take music notation as a suggestive rather than a prescriptive medium, the reading makes considerable sense as a response to a stylized mimesis. For if the written grace notes hint at a slightly mistuned rustic drone, the element of 'noise' would surely carry through every time the drone is re-struck, rather than being restricted to two initial instances.

Bringing a reedier tenor timbre, recorded more distantly than Goerne's, Padmore's vocal rendition also melds text-fidelity with imaginative response. His occasional touches of rubato never perturb a stricter rhythmic discipline; his final crotchets taper quickly enough to project the regular phrasing. But he, too, reads the score flexibly – for example, by taking Schubert's few notated dotted rhythms as an invitation to add his own. We might hear these as an inflection of the vocal line in

response to the insistent trochaic rhythms in the text. But they are also redolent of close attentiveness to the piano, whose sectional perorations in bars 27-28 and 49-50 come to feature one melodic bar explicitly foreshadowed (bar 26) and echoed (bar 48) through Padmore's re-dotting.

Whatever the cause, the markedly stronger impression, in this recording, of a unitary interpretation need not imply anything like the authorial unity of Cone's 'composer's voice'. The effect of closely collaborative reading arises as much from the interplay of distinctive departures from the score as from any 'realisation' of a fully notated *Lied*. Indeed, we might describe the result as something like a new embodiment, in its own varicoloured sounding medium, of the expressive deep freeze once suggested, much differently, in the media of poetic and compositional writing.

The recording by Schäfer and Schneider brings yet another performative recasting, which – while cannily displacing any sense of the accompaniment as narrator – further deepens the suspicion that faithful rendition and overt adaptation may differ only by degree. Schneider's introductory evocation falls somewhere between the other two: he strikes the D sharp together with the A but as clean pick-up to the E (and plays it only twice); a slight pedal blur through the melodic coils can also be heard as part of the stylized mimesis. But Schäfer's vocal entry brings something more radically new to the mix. Here it is not a case of a few extra dotted rhythms but of a fresh temporal feel throughout. Pushing far beyond Padmore in her flexible response to the written quavers, she imparts a playful, dance-like *Schwung* to many

wider leaps, delivering a reading that is by far the most rhythmically vivid of the three.

If this seems a perverse response to the bleak text, that may be because it is misleading to describe it solely as a technical aspect of *rhythm* rather than as a broader effect of *characterization*. In a word: Schäfer *acts* her delivery of the text, with dancingly emphatic diction, as if in the garb and mask of a storyteller; we can almost see the wide eyes and witty gestures of a stage entertainer who knowingly indulges our shared taste for bleak gothic imagery. More precisely, the singer here vividly brings to mind her own recording of Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* – that famous mongrel offspring of song cycle, melodrama, commedia dell'arte and Berlin cabaret.^{xi} And it is the tradition of Schoenberg's muse Albertine Zehme and the Parisian café-concert *diseuses* – virtuoso characterizers of language all – that vividly comes to mind as Schäfer opens a wholly new narrative space around music so ready prey to self-indulgent pathos in more earnestly 'Romantic' renditions.

Of course we can dismiss such modernisation as an inappropriate twenty-first-century responses to nineteenth-century art. But even from these few instances it is possible to glean a deeper point: that the most ostensibly text-faithful rendition will inevitably also spring from performance traditions no less anachronistic than any post-*Pierrot* stylings. Goerne's approach would be more at home in an opera house (where he made his name singing Wagner, among other things) than a Biedermeier drawing room; the rich expressivity that drenches every note of his 'Leiermann' could be criticised (from a different angle) for turning an eerily idiosyncratic musical

reading into one more straightforwardly lyrical outpouring. On the other hand, to hear the less text-faithful rendition of Padmore and Lewis as a deeper (because more *inexpressive*) response to those spare musical means is not to make any stronger claim for its historical ‘authenticity’. This version, too, brings its own historically alien sonorous halo, redolent of the Oxbridge chapels in which Padmore first trained.

In contrast to the timeless, somewhat abstract personas Cone once invited us to hear, what emerges from this brief exploration is a sense of the thorough saturation of all real, embodied voices with traces of the spaces and histories that nourished their development. Putting aside any idea of fidelity to a fictive, unchanging original, then, we might best inquire: what does *this* unique accretion of audible spaces and contexts bring to a score’s suggestive invitations, and how does *this* new voice re-frame – and navigate – the histories through which the song has passed? It is in the same terms, finally, that we can best proceed to consider those versions whose more extravagant transformations pose a much greater challenge to purist hearers.

Lest we doubt that such purism still persists, one of the performers just named conveniently offered clear proof even as this chapter was being written. Reviewing Ian Bostridge’s recent book on *Die Winterreise* for *The New York Review of Books*, Brendel felt the need to assert: ‘*Winterreise* doesn’t need updating, embellishing, transcribing, or paraphrasing’ (Brendel 2015, 29).^{xii} Of course it doesn’t. But Müller’s (and Goethe’s) poems didn’t need to be set to music either, nor formally altered in the process. Pious reverence for un-embellished Schubert songs is at odds with the

creative attitude to poetic texts that gave rise to the music in the first place. Brendel inevitably updates his *Winterreise* recordings to suit modern sound ideals; Zender's more extravagant paraphrase offers one more creative response to expressive invitations, one step further down the line from the initial compositional embellishment of Müller.^{xiii}

As it happens, 'Gute Nacht' and 'Der Leiermann' feature Zender's most extensive additions to the Schubert model. His cycle begins with a lengthy new introduction based on the quaver plodding and modal inflections of the first song, whose unpredictably accented lurches and swells hint at unruly forces beneath. After settling onto a respectfully literal string transcription of the original introduction to prepare the vocal entry, the setting continues with a largely restrained arrangement – voice part unaltered – through two strophes delicately differentiated by variations in scoring. But the second return of the original intro brings abrupt reminders of underlying turbulence – and in the third strophe, composed interpretation erupts fully into hearing.

The image of 'hounds' now seems to trigger irrepressible memories of modern musics, for a sudden break in metrical decorum – like a filmic cut – inserts a violently scored *ff* repetition, set rhythmically off by one quaver, and sung 'mit Verstärkung' (with great force). Normality briefly resumes for the first proverbial consolation – but the taint of irony previously noted now triggers another violent, response. Just before the first cadential 'gute Nacht', the music explodes again (as if against its own falsity), and with another lurch to *ff*, the singer snarls his address to the 'Liebchen' in

a deranged *Sprechstimme*. More blatant than Schäfer's subtle echoes of the same *milieu*, this Schoenbergian reference does not stand so singularly, here, as an audible trace of intervening generic history. For after a quick shift back to 'song' for the last 'gute Nacht' we reach a delicate rescoring of the blithe slippage from minor to major – and then, in place of *one* transitional bar, fully *fifteen* bars of loosely canonical play on the new D major hues. Clearly no further Expressionist revenant, this new expansion instead brings to mind a slightly earlier phase of generic history, in the orchestral songs of Mahler – pre-eminent *fin-de-siècle* translator of Schubert's fading modal expressivity.

Some implications of these stylistic echoes might seem relatively obvious. By allowing latent aspects of the poetry to burst into consciousness, for example, the Expressionistic turns can be heard as blatant sonorous markers of the post-Freudian perspective from which we now regard early Romantic alienation. But perhaps the Mahler-esque expansion offers a more poignant opening to historiographical reflection. For if we consider how thickly the device of modal mixture was to be overlaid, later, by vari- and multi- and post-modal styles, then we might also acknowledge that it would become ever harder to recover its original, Schubertian expressive acuity – and thus understand why an attempt to do so may have found post-Mahlerian expansion a near necessity.

Zender's 'Der Leiermann', also much expanded, proves a somewhat more consistent adaptation. The vocal phrases remaining entirely unchanged, its main transformation seems – however fortuitously – a strikingly precise instantiation of

the very ‘split’ Cone once imagined for this stylized instrumental mimesis. A brief new introduction delivers us to the grace-noted drone scored for *völkisch* accordion. Then, the hurdy-gurdy tune appears, multiply refracted through a temporally and timbrally flexible canon, whose unpredictably layered exchange evokes, at once, both a rustically improvised musical ‘reality’ and its proliferating echoes within a resonant mental space. After a few instances of more blatant worldly mimesis (e.g. a violent *ff* variant following upon the howling dogs) and a dramatic exchange much intensified by a viscerally dissonant harmonic lurch, the cycle closes with a registrally extravagant postlude that adds post-Ligetian ‘colour field’ composition to the range of resources evoked.

Inspired as the multiply refracted hurdy-gurdy may be, it could be that the new, timbrally vivid psychological space here comes at the cost of a dismembered vocal-verbal continuity, and a relinquishing of those very hints of frozen temporal automatism – i.e. the two-bar units traded quasi-metronomically between the two personae – that ironically render the thinner and paler Padmore/ Lewis version *more* modern in overall effect. By comparison, the more consistent compositional – and performative – flexibility across *both* vocal and instrumental components of a last, even more radically iconoclastic instance, Reinbert de Leeuw’s 2007 set of *Lieder nach Schubert and Schumann*, ‘adapted and recomposed’ for Barbara Sukowa (as per the liner note – which attributes the ‘artistic concept’ to both of them), arguably seems the more fully-realized instance of explicit reflection, through sounding means, on the questions raised about ‘Romantic song’ by an awareness of the genre’s tangled subsequent histories.

The De Leeuw/ Sukowa cycle frames the nineteenth-century progenitors of the genre even more explicitly within a historical vista determined primarily by their most influential modernist descendant. In broad structure – twenty-one songs in three groups of seven – the composite form precisely follows *Pierrot lunaire*; the first section begins by recalling the famous seven-note motive from that work's first song, 'Mondestrunken'. Following from this nod to Schoenberg, we find eight songs by Schumann freely distributed amongst thirteen by Schubert (including five from *Die Winterreise* and five Goethe settings); snippets from other works by both composers slip in as interludes or added layers of accompaniment. An investigation of the logic of the sequence must await another time, but for now we might at least note a partial counterweight to Schubert's proportional pre-eminence in the formal shape of the whole, which begins and ends with the first and last songs of *Dichterliebe*.

The wildly variegated sonorous means featured across this cycle place it even further beyond methodologically disciplined critique than most other performances. Sukowa ranges vocally from near-straight declamation ('Heidenröslein', no. 19) through whispering, shouting and *Sprechstimme*, to lyrical singing and even caricatural cabaret croon ('Ständchen', no. 18). Within a single song, she might sing one line exactly as written only to switch, for the next, into whispered or heightened speech; haphazardly leaving out some words, she slips others in early, or late, or with the loosest relation to the accompaniment. Meanwhile, de Leeuw's expanded *Pierrot* ensemble also ranges, extravagantly, from chillingly sparse harp and pizzicato

textures ('Ich hab' im Traum geweinet', no. 12) to frenzied supplement to vocalized sexual hysteria ('Gretchen am Spinnrade', no. 5), to *Erwartung*-level expressive intensification ('Der Doppelgänger', no. 14). But beyond all these sonorous transformations (which differ only in particulars from Zender's) there remains one singular aspect of this version that most deserves an attempt at critical appraisal.

De Leeuw and Zender approach the *temporal* identity of each song with a flexibility that renders their joint response to generic history distinct from all others discussed. Only rarely do they trace a formally complete rendition of what Schubert wrote. Instead, they continually drop or elide selected passages of text, or melody, or both. At times, the result can be heard as a wry play with canonical over-familiarity – as when they leave the last two words of 'Der Erlkönig' unsung, forcing knowing hearers to fill them in from memory. But at others, the seemingly haphazard omissions deliver what sound like partially eroded recollections – or imperfect recreations from incomplete sources. This sense of frayed or eroded musical objects is particularly clear in two early adaptations from *Die Winterreise*: 'Gute Nacht' (no. 2) and 'Im Dorfe' (no. 4). Following the precedent of these companions, 'Der Leiermann' also revisits this idea when it emerges as the first song of 'part III' (no. 15) – but brings new variants as well.

The dreamy instrumental intro to this third section darkens to sour dissonance before emitting two annunciatory signals of the song. The first, a spasm-like low string spiccato, *sur la touche*, will recur haphazardly like a stuttering new sonorous sign of inertia; the second is the familiar grace-note figure on piano. Over this

composite background, an oboe takes up the coiling hurdy-gurdy tune – now fissured with gaps (we only get the last three notes of bar 3, and only the E chord, not the second hiccup, in bar 5, etcetera). Soon the vocal part too starts to erode: the third textual phrase is erased up to the (half-declaired) words ‘wankt er hin und her’; the fourth (‘un sein kleiner Teller’) has lost its second repetition. Yet more erasures pockmark the second large ‘strophe’: the third line (‘und er lässt es gehen’) only belatedly appears as a blurted declamation; both versions of the fourth (‘dreht, und seine Leier...’) drop away entirely. Much sooner than expected, we are hearing the last questions to the ‘wonderful old man’, delivered in an intimate whisper that has left all melodic lyricism behind.

Brendel is right: there was no need to treat the song this way. But a signal value of this version, as a pedagogical provocation to students whose relation to the conservatoire mind-set central to classical music education for decades has long been much enriched by approaches adapted from folk or jazz or pop, is the clarity with which it forces us to ask why anyone would *want* to—in other words, just what obligation we now bear to the canonical scores whose inviolable integrity has been so often assumed, in history surveys, theory texts and recital programmes alike. It can thus also conceivably goad us towards our own ideas about how best to incorporate into ‘composed and performed interpretation’ a vivid reflection of our own evolving perspectives on the moth-eaten bundle of ideas about ‘art’ we have inherited from the early Romantics. Perhaps we glimpse here one compelling reason for returning as teachers, again and again, to the canonical ‘art songs’ about which some musicians remain so preciously defensive. They may, when all is said and done,

differ only in kind from other repertoires (e.g. jazz standards, pop songs), which boast their own vibrant histories of successive appropriations and 'cover versions'. But the hall of mirrors opened by these older songs extend back more deeply, into the very wellsprings of the traditions that, by some accounts, have made us—or continue to make us—'modern'. They thus can help us affirm the powers of the final voice in a chain that winds all the way forward from eighteenth-century poetry, through nineteenth-century song, into twentieth- and twenty-first-century composed and performed interpretation: our own voice, *talking back*.

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Discography

Schubert: Winterreise - Live from Albert Hall, Mathias Goerne (baritone) and Alfred Brendel (piano), Decca 467 092-2 (2004)

Schubert: Winterreise, Mark Padmore (tenor) and Paul Lewis (piano), Harmonia Mundi HMU 907484 (2009)

Schubert: Winterreise, D911, Christine Schäfer (soprano) and Eric Schneider (piano), Onyx Classics ONYX4010 (2006)

Barbara Sukowa (soprano), Reinbert de Leeuw (composer and conductor) and the Schönberg Ensemble, *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai: Lieder nach Robert Schumann und Franz Schubert*, Winter & Winter 910 132-2 (2007)

Hans Zender, *Schubert's 'Winterreise': Eine komponierte Interpretation*, Christoph Prégardien (tenor), Sylvain Cambreling (conductor), Klangforum Wien, Kairos 0012002KAI (1999).

ⁱ One of the more extreme formulations of this potential (or expectation) of 'surprise' can be found in Kramer 1984. In what follows, I will not cite the vast literature that could open at every point, but will note only directly relevant resources.

ⁱⁱ It can prove suggestive, in this context, simply to note that this tiny text has given rise to at least two full-length critical monographs: Seggebrecht 1978; and Fischer, Soltek *et al* 1999.

ⁱⁱⁱ The poem, here printed right after a different ‘Wandrer’s Nachtlid’ (‘Der du von dem Himmel bist ...’), carries the title ‘Ein Gleiches’ (another one) (65).

^{iv} They are taken from: (1) Viëtor, 1949, 60 (trans. credited to Emery Neff); (2) Zeydel 1955, 78-79; (3) and (4) Goethe, ed. Middleton 1983, 59. (3) is credited to Longfellow, (4) to Middleton himself.

^v Amongst a vast literature on these basic categories, see e.g. Genette 1992, which touches on many key stages in the centuries of debate.

^{vi} I know no of precedent for this modal-melodic approach in the specialist Schubert literature, which tends to exemplify the institutionalized music-theoretical emphasis on harmony and structural voice leading. (See e.g. Damschroder 2010). However alien it may appear for Schubert, the focus on harmonic ‘palette’ and characteristic modal inflections proves useful preparation for the more elaborate, multi-modal explorations in the fin-de-siècle French *mélodie* repertoire, which I often present as a later unit on the same course.

^{vii} Recall that Beethoven, just two years before, had included within his string quartet op. 132 (1825) a ‘Heilige Dankgesang [...] in der lydischen Tonart’.

^{viii} I don’t take this modal focus as a ‘universal solvent’ to the thorny question of cyclicity, but rather find it useful to broach the question, at least, as to whether there may be an interesting difference (in degree if not kind) between this sort of modal tendency in Schubert and a more thoroughly ‘functional-harmonic’ cyclic imagination in Schumann, e.g. in the much-debated case of *Dichterliebe*.

^{ix} A useful instance of contemporary performance criticism, and a convenient orientation to the wider literature, is Cook 2014.

^x I have redacted these formulations from across the first two chapters of Cone 1974: the first two as stated on 12 and 16, the last drawn from a more diffuse discussion of the ‘subconscious’ on 34-37.

^{xi} For the multiple traditions behind *Pierrot* see Dunsby 1992.

^{xii} The review is of Bostridge 2015.

^{xiii} An obvious reference point here is the essays of Roland Barthes, notably ‘The Death of the Author’ and ‘From Work to Text’. For both (and also ‘The Grain of the Voice’, which I find less applicable) see Barthes 1977.

Code, ‘The Many Voices of “Art Song”’

Figures and Examples

Wandrer's Nachtlied

op. 96, no. 3

Ex 4.1

Langsam

Ü - ber al - len Gip - feln ist Ruh, in al - len

5

Wip - feln spü - rest du kaum ein - en hauch; die Vög - lein schwei gen

8

schwei gen im Wal - de, war - te nur, war - te nur, bal - de ru - hest du

11

auch, war - te nur, war - te nur, bal - de ru - hest du auch.

Fig. 4.1

Literary type:	LYRIC	EPIC (narrative)	DRAMA
VOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the poem is a direct expression in the first person - the lyric 'I' (the authorial voice) can be implicit or explicit - direct address, either to the reader or someone else: the lyric 'I-You' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the poem is a story told in the third person about other individuals and their experiences - 'he/she' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the author gives named characters direct expression of their own experience - 'I' is spoken from other fictional perspectives
TIME (verb tense)	- tends to be an expression/ observation about the present	- tends to be in the past tense: 'once upon a time'	- present situations, enacted
FORMAL PROCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a 'frozen moment' in time; no clear plot or progression of events - new insight emerges through circulation of imagery, juxtaposition, combination, reflection, etcetera 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - both tend to be 'plot-driven', i.e. telling (or enacting) a series of events across a directed, sequential development - the ending presents a markedly different situation from the beginning 	

Fig. 4.2

Compare *Wandrer's Nachtlid*, an exemplary Romantic lyric, with *Erk König*, a ballad that mixes all three poetic types

Narrator:	Wer reitet zu spät durch Nacht und Wind? Es ist der Vater mit seinem Kind; Er hat den Knaben wohl in dem Arm, Er fasst ihn sicher, er hält ihn warm.	a Who rides so late through night and wind? a It is the father with his child. b He holds the young boy tight in his arm, b He grasps him securely, he keeps him warm.	Third-person description of 'narrative' BUT present-tense immediacy of 'lyric'
Father:	'Mein sohn, was birgst du so bang dein Gesicht?'	c 'My son, what makes you hide your face?'	Implicit (present) 'drama' involving three distinct characters (note the precise formal structure of the dramatic alternation ...)
Son:	'Siehst, Vater, du den Erk König nicht? Den Erk König mit Kron' und Schweif?'	c 'Don't you see, father, the Elfking there? d The King of the elves with his crown and train?'	
Father:	'Mein Sohn, est ist en Nebelstreif.'	d 'My son, it is a streak of mist.'	
Elfking:	'Du liebes Kind, komm, geh mit mir! Gar schöne Spiele spiel'ich mit dir; Manch bunte Blumen sind an dem Strand; Meine Mutter had manch' gülden Gewand.'	<i>'You lovely child, come away with me! Such beautiful games I will play with you; Many gay flowers grow by the shore; My mother has many golden robes.'</i>	
Son:	'Mein Vater, mein Vater, und hörest du nicht Was Erk König mir leise Verspricht?'	c 'My father, my father, and do you not hear c What the Elfking is softly promising me?'	
Father:	'Sei ruhig, bleibe ruhig, mein Kind: In dürren Blättern säuselt der Wind.'	a Be calm, stay calm, my child: a The wind is rustling in dry leaves.'	
Elfking:	'Willst, feiner Knabe, du mit mir gehn? Meine Töchter sollen dich warten schön; Meine Töchter führen den nächtlichen Reihn Und wiegen und tanzen und singen dich ein.'	<i>'You fine boy, won't you come along with me? My daughters will wait upon you; My daughters lead the nightly round And rock you and dance for you and sing you to sleep</i>	
Son:	'Mein Vater, mein Vater, und siehst du nicht dort Erk Königs Töchter am düstem Ort?'	'My father, my father, and do you not see The Elfking's daughters there in the dark?'	
Father:	'Mein Sohn, mein sohn, ich she es genau: Es scheinen die alten Wieden so grau.'	'My son, my son, I see it quite clearly: It is a the the gleaming of the old grey willow.'	
Elfking:	'Ich liebe dich, mich reizt deine schöne Gestalt, Und bist du nicht willig, so brauch' ich Gewalt.'	<i>'I love you, your beautiful face attracts me, And if you're not willing, then I will use force.'</i>	
Son:	'Mein Vater, mein Vater, jetzt fasst er mich an! Erk König had mir en Leids getan!'	'My father, my father, now he is taking hold of me! The Elfking has done me harm!'	
Narrator:	Dem Vater grauset's, er reitet geschwind, Er hält in Armen das ächzende Kind, Erreicht den Hof mit Müh und Not; In seinem Armen das Kind war tot.	a The father is terrified, he rides like the wind, a He holds in his arms the moaning child; He reaches the house with effort and toil; In his arms the child was dead.	Return to third-person description; - ONLY HERE do we get the traditional narrative past tense.

Fig. 4.3

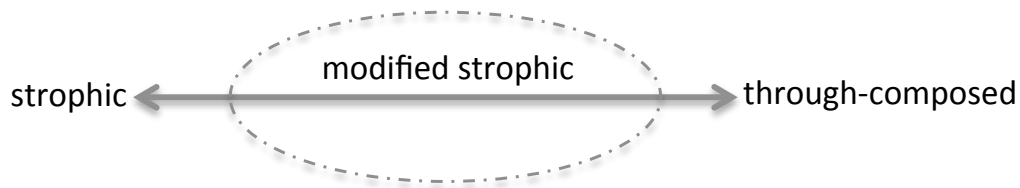


Fig. 4.4

I. Gute Nacht

Fremd bin ich eingezogen, a 7
 Fremd zieh' ich wieder aus. b 6
 Der Mai war mir gewogen a 7
 Mit manchem Blumenstrauß. b 6
 Das Mädchen sprach von Liebe, c 7
 Die Mutter gar von Eh', - d 6
 Nun ist die Welt so trübe, c 7
 Der Weg gehüllt in Schnee. d 6

Ich kann zu meiner Reisen
 Nicht wählen mit der Zeit,
 Muß selbst den Weg mir weisen
 In dieser Dunkelheit.
 Es zieht ein Mondenschatten
 Als mein Gefährte mit,
 Und auf den weißen Matten
 Such' ich des Wildes Tritt.

Was soll ich länger weilen,
 Daß man mich trieb hinaus ?
 Laß irre Hunde heulen
 Vor ihres Herren Haus;
 Die Liebe liebt das Wandern -
 Gott hat sie so gemacht -
 Von einem zu dem andern.
 Fein Liebchen, gute Nacht !

Will dich im Traum nicht stören,
 Wår schad' um deine Ruh'.
 Sollst meinen Tritt nicht hören -
 Sacht, sacht die Türe zu !
 Schreib im Vorübergehen
 Ans Tor dir: Gute Nacht,
 Damit du mögest sehen,
 An dich hab' ich gedacht.

I. Good Night

A stranger I first came here
 A stranger I now move on.
 May was kind towards me
 With many a bouquet of flowers.
 The maiden spoke of love,
 The mother even of marriage,—
 Now is the world so gloomy
 The road deep in snow.

I cannot, for my journey
 Choose the time,
 Must find my own way
 In this darkness.
 A shadow in the moonlight
 Will keep me company,
 And on the white meadows
 I'll search for animal tracks.

Why should I linger longer,
 Until someone drives me out?
 Leave crazy dogs to howl
 At their master's door;
 Love loves to wander—
 God has made it so—
 From one to the other.
 My dearest love, good night!

'proverbial' turn

personal address!

I'll not disturb your dreams,
 A shame to spoil your peace,
 You shall not hear my step—
 Soft, softly close the door!
 I'll write, as I go by,
 On the door to you: Good night,
 So that you might see,
 That I have thought of you.

**final stanza:
 saturated with
 the lyric 'I-You'**

Die Winterreise, D 911
1: Gute Nacht

Mässig

7
Fremd bin ich ein-ge-zo-gen, fremdlich ich wie-der, aus, der Mi war mir ge-
Ich kann zu mei-ner Rei-sen nicht wahl-en mit der-Zeit, muß selbst den Weg mir

13
wo-gen mit man-chem Blu-menstrauß. Das Mäd-chen sprach von Lie-be, die Mut-ter gar von Eh-
wei-sen in die-ser Dun-ke-l-heit Es zieht ein Mon-den schat-ten als mein, Ge-fähr-te mit-

19
Eh', das Mäd-chen sprach von Lie-be, die Mut-ter gar von Eh'. Nun
mit, es zieht ein Mon-den schat-ten als mein, Ge-fähr-te mit, Und

26
ist die Welt so trü-be der, Weg ge-hüllt in Schne, nun ist die Welt so trü-be der-
auf den wei-ßen Mat-ten such ich des Wil-des, Tritt, und auf den wei-ßen Mat-ten such

32
Weg ge-hüllt in Schne, Was
ich des Wil-des Tritt.

40
soll ich län-ger wei-len, daß man mich trieb hin-aus, laß ir-re Hun-de heu-len vor

46
ih-res Her-ren Haus. Die Lie-be liebt das Wan-tern, Gott hat sie so ge-macht, von

52
Ei-nem zu dem An-tern, Gott hat sie so gemacht. Die Lie-be liebt das

59
Wan-tern, fein Lieb-chen gu-te Nacht, von Ei-nem zu dem An-tern, fein Lieb-chen gu-te

65
Nacht. Will

72
dich im Traum nicht stö-ren, wärschadum dei-ne Ruh, solt mei-nen Tritt nicht hö-ren, sacht,

78
sacht, die Tü-re zu. Schreib im Vor-über-ge-hen ans Tor dir gu-te Nacht, da-mit du mö-gest

85
se-hen, an dich hab ich ge-dacht. Schreib im Vor-über-ge-hen ans

92
Tor dir gu-te Nacht, da-mit du mö-gest se-hen, an dich hab ich ge-dacht, an

98
un poco ritard
dich hab ich ge-dacht.

un poco ritard. a tempo p pp dim.

Fig. 4.5

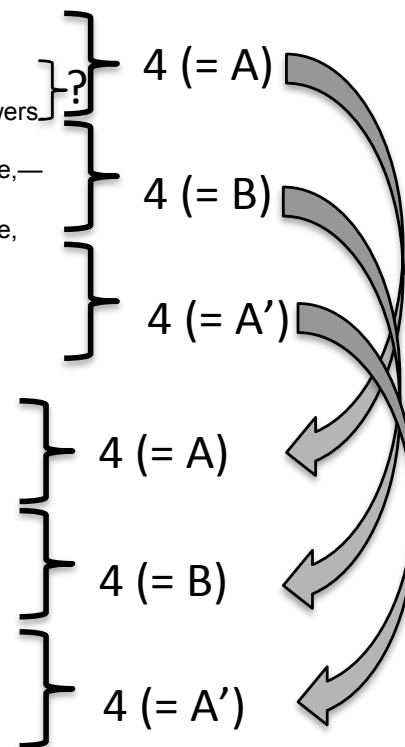
Fremd bin ich eingezogen, Fremd zieh' ich wieder aus. Der Mai war mir gewogen Mit manchem Blumenstrauß. Das Mädchen sprach von Liebe, Die Mutter gar von Eh', Das Mädchen sprach von Liebe, Die Mutter gar von Eh', Nun ist die Welt so trübe, Der Weg gehüllt in Schnee. Nun ist die Welt so trübe, Der Weg gehüllt in Schnee.	A stranger I first came here A stranger I now move on. May was kind towards me With many a bouquet of flowers. The maiden spoke of love, The mother even of marriage,— The maiden spoke of love, The mother even of marriage, Now is the world so gloomy The road deep in snow. Now is the world so gloomy The road deep in snow.	
Ich kann zu meiner Reisen Nicht wählen mit der Zeit, Muß selbst den Weg mir weisen In dieser Dunkelheit. Es zieht ein Mondenschatten Als mein Gefährte mit, Es zieht ein Mondenschatten Als mein Gefährte mit, Und auf den weißen Matten Such' ich des Wildes Tritt. Und auf den weißen Matten Such' ich des Wildes Tritt	I cannot, for my journey Choose the time, Must find my own way In this darkness. A shadow in the moonlight Will keep me company A shadow in the moonlight Will keep me company And on the white meadows I'll search for animal tracks And on the white meadows I'll search for animal tracks.	

Fig. 4.6

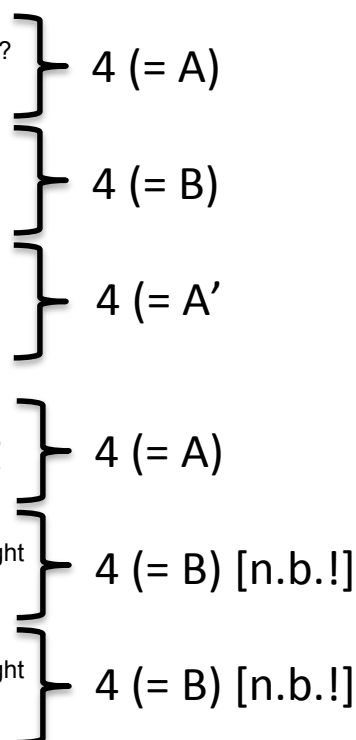
Was soll ich länger weilen, Daß man mich trieb hinaus ? Laß irre Hunde heulen Vor ihres Herren Haus; Die Liebe liebt das Wandern - Gott hat sie so gemacht - Die Liebe liebt das Wandern - Gott hat sie so gemacht - Von einem zu dem andern. Fein Liebchen, gute Nacht ! Von einem zu dem andern. Fein Liebchen, gute Nacht !	Why should I linger longer, Until someone drives me out? Leave crazy dogs to howl At their master's door; Love loves to wander— God has made it so— Love loves to wander— God has made it so— From one to the other. My dearest love, good night! From one to the other. My dearest love, good night!	
Will dich im Traum nicht stören, Wär schad' um deine Ruh'. Sollst meinen Tritt nicht hören - Sacht, sacht die Türe zu ! Schreib im Vorübergehen Ans Tor dir: Gute Nacht, Damit du mögest sehen, An dich hab' ich gedacht. Schreib im Vorübergehen Ans Tor dir: Gute Nacht, Damit du mögest sehen, An dich hab' ich gedacht.	I'll not disturb your dreams, A shame to spoil your peace, You shall not hear my step— Soft, softly close the door! I'll write, as I go by, On the door to you: Good night So that you might see, That I have thought of you. I'll write, as I go by, On the door to you: Good night So that you might see, That I have thought of you.	

Fig. 4.7

XXIV. Der Leiermann

Drüben hinterm Dorfe (a) 6
Steht ein Leiermann b 5
Und mit starren Fingern (a) 6
Dreht er was er kann. b 5

Barfuß auf dem Eise (a) 6
Wankt er hin und her c 5
Und sein kleiner Teller (a) 6
Bleibt ihm immer leer. c 5

Keiner mag ihn hören, (a)
Keiner sieht ihn an, b
Und die Hunde knurren (a)
Um den alten Mann. b

Und er läßt es gehen, (a)
Alles wie es will, d
Dreht, und seine Leier (a)
Steht ihm nimmer still. d

Wunderlicher Alter ! (a)
Soll ich mit dir geh'n ? e
Willst zu meinen Liedern (a)
Deine Leier dreh'n ? e

XXIV. The Organ-grinder

There beyond the village
Stands an organ-grinder
And with numb fingers
He plays, what he can.

Barefoot on the ice
He staggers back and forth,
And his little plate
Stays forever empty.

No one cares to listen,
No one looks at him,
And the dogs snarl
Around the old man.

And he lets it happen
Everything as it will,
Plays, and his hurdy-gurdy
Stays never still.

Strange old man!
Shall I go with you?
Will you, to my songs
Your hurdy-gurdy play?

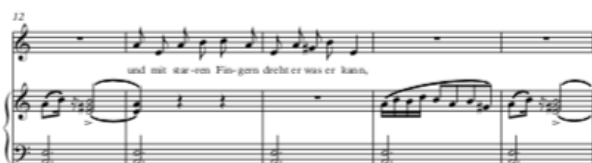
four strophes
third-person
description
*(but note
recurring
rhyme and close
textual variant)*

one strophe
lyric address

Ex 4.3

24: Der Leiermann

Etwas langsam



2



3

